SYNOPSIS

HIV/AIDS AND WOMEN SEX WORKERS
A study in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh

Synopsis of thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Social Work

By
M. BHASKAR RAO

Under the guidance of

Dr. T. SOBHA SRI
Department of Social Work
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
ANDHRA UNIVERSITY, VISAKHAPATNAM

ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA
2013

Introduction

The study seeks to examine the demographic characteristics of women sex workers, the influenced factors which put them in this profession and the problems faced by these people, and the role of NGOs in prevention of HIV/AIDS spread through the people especially women sex workers who are professionally participating sexual intercourse with the clients at different levels. It has found that both NGOs and the Government take advantage of each other's weaknesses and strengths. The Government does not emphasise implementation due to that NGOs constitute a strong group of actors in this field. Still, in formulating HIV/AIDS sensitive policies the Government is active and the Indian political commitment in relation to HIV/AIDS is unique in a Third World perspective. Therefore, NGOs tend to neglect the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and work after their own agendas. Further NGOs need to improve coordination among themselves and in relation to the Government. There are differences between international NGOs and local NGOs in the sense that international NGOs have better human resources and more funding but local NGOs have better contextual understanding.

As a well established democracy, the Indian Government has taken number of policies and action of plans to control HIV/AIDS. Still lack of proper implementation to handle the HIV/AIDS epidemic on its own, hundreds of NGOs are working in different areas stretching from humanitarian relief to governmental capacity building. At present many NGOs are working in the health sector and almost all of these are active in HIV/AIDS problematic in some sense. In a context as the East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, it becomes important to concentrate on both selected measures and attacking structural conditions that affect and worsen the HIV/AIDS situation. Argues from the previous studies and the history of the district noticed that in some areas and villages connected with National Highways still the prostitution activities are continuing by the women sex workers. It seems like the HIV/AIDS situation in this area (East Godavari) is a certain issue concerning a certain group of people at a certain time.

This is a study about what extent the women sex workers performing their activities in East Godavari district and facing a dangerous threat as the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Further, it is a study about to what extent the active and strong participation of NGOs in prevention of HIV/AIDS among the women sex workers and what are the necessary steps taken for create awareness among these people and took action for their rehabilitation. The study also carried out in Andhra Pradesh specifically in East Godavari district due to long spread of National Highway from one corner to the other, functions celebrate in remote villages, and particularly some towns and villages. Still the women sex workers are performing their activities.

The present study is an attempt to draw better understanding of the implications and experience of literature of the experience from intervention Since the study is a part of expanding learning process, the area covered in the study is adequate enough to understand the current conditions of the sample respondents and based on limited sample size too, which forms a major limitation of the study taken from 347 women sex workers. Hence, the results of these studies reveal the range of the physical, psychological and health problems of women sex workers. To ensure that women sex workers get the health care they need, research that specifically focuses on their general health problems and social problems, and how they need helping hand from other sources like government and non-government organization (NGOs) are required.

Need and significance of the study

Prevention may be better than cure, but identifying the real cause for increase in girl trafficking and creating awareness among girl children and their parents had become a big challenge. An NGO called ‘Kadalika’ (movement), which has been taking up a number of programmes on education, social evils, HIV/AIDS, health and hygiene, has taken up the challenge. Another organization called St. Paul’s Trust based in the HIV high prevalence district of East Godavari in Andhra Pradesh. They work with orphans, children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS and their families. The initiative is comprehensive and includes HIV prevention, care and support programmes within an enabling environment. The national and state governments in India are

planning to increase their commitment to strengthen HIV treatment, care and support for children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS and their family members by expanding policy initiatives and committing resources more than ever before.

Peddapuram town in East Godavari district was once a haven of prostitution (TeluguNow.com). The whole town was forced into prostitution by the land lords in the pre-independence days. While such is the pathetic story of the women trapped by the heinous society, the government and social reformers have successfully tried to unshackle the present younger generations from the profession by offering education and alternative employment, still many young women diverting to sex work as their profession. Therefore, there is a need of study on women sex workers in East Godavari district, and how far the role of NGOs shows their impact in prevention and control of HIV/AIDS among those people.

The women sex workers are classified into four categories based on their location and operation activity such as Home based, Brothel based, Highway based and Call girls. Hence, the present study has been focused on Socio- Economic conditions and cultural aspects of women sex workers in East Godavari district, and the role of NGOs in prevention of spread HIV/AIDS through women sex workers. Therefore, the study was titled “The role of NGOs in prevention of HIV/AIDS – A study on women sex workers in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh”.

The Objectives of the Study

1. To study the demographic profile of women sex workers in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.
2. To examine the reasons for taking of sex work as profession by women sex workers in the study area.
3. To analyze the professional performance and hazards observed by the women sex workers.
4. To examine the pull and push factors determine the women sex workers to continue in the present profession.

5. To scrutinize the role of NGOs in prevention of HIV/AIDS among women sex workers and initiatives taken by them for rehabilitation of these effected people.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant difference among different types of respondents regarding the influence of family factor to become a sex worker.
2. There is no significant difference among different types of respondents regarding the influence of relative factor to become a sex worker.
3. There is no significant difference among different types of respondents regarding the influence of caste/ community factor to become a sex worker.
4. There is no significant difference among different types of respondents regarding the influence of social factors to become sex workers.
5. There is no significant difference among different types of respondents regarding the influence of behavioural factor to become sex worker.
6. There is no significant difference among different types of women sex workers in getting help from other people.
7. There is no significant difference among different types of respondents referred to go for testing of HIV.

Methodology

The present study was undertaken with brothel based and non-brothel-based women sex workers in the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. The district is estimated to have one of the highest HIV-prevalence in the state. In this district, 18 villages/towns from 10 mandals were selected as the study locations where the NGOs are working for the benefit of these sex work groups and they are implementing HIV and STI prevention programs with women sex workers.

The questionnaire is the main tool which is self-report format designed to elicit information that can be obtained through the responses of the subject (women sex workers). Thus the questionnaire is the most appropriate data collection instrument for the current study, which is aimed at exploring the demographic profile, causative factors for selecting the present profession, attitudes, problems, knowledge on HIV/AIDS and

the role of NGOs in prevention of HIV/AIDS and rehabilitation of women sex workers in East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

In this study random sampling method has been adopted. The sample size for the current quantitative study consisted of 347 respondents from the target groups, where 78 samples from home based, 85 samples from brothel based, 175 samples from highway based and only nine call girls. After collecting the data it has been analyzed applying different statistical methods to calculate frequencies, percentages, chi-square and ANOVA tests by using of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-15.0). The required tables were drawn and the statistical tests have been conducted for the data analysis and testing of hypotheses of the study. The following findings have been derived from the data analysis.

Major findings

1. The data revealed that major group of women sex workers in the study are highway based followed by brothel based and home based, and very few are gall girls. Their literacy levels are very poor and limited to secondary and below. The women sex workers are from OB, BC, SC and ST communities, where BCs participation is more and STs sample is less. The sample was consisted with unmarried, married, widows, divorced and deserted women, and their income levels are found very less. Most of them are living in nuclear families and a significant number of respondents are living in joint and broken families.
2. According to the data it shows that most of the women sex workers are having 3-4 dependents. So the main unforeseen reason for their profession is the dependent ratio in the families. A significant number of women selected sex work as profession because of peer groups and failure of marriage life. The easy money also played an important role among some of the women sex workers in selecting the present profession. For all these the main reason that made these women respondents as sex workers is poverty.
3. The data reveals that more than fifty percent of women sex workers are participating with 5-6 clients per day. The timings of these sex workers stands

between 6 pm to 10 pm and 10 am to 2 pm. The number of coitus per a day participated by majority of home based and highway bases sex workers are 3-4 but in the case of brothel based sex workers are 5-6 coitus per day. Almost every one use condoms and they prefer for normal sex.

4. The data revealed that the major group of the women sex workers of their parents and relatives aware and accepted due to economic reasons. some of the women sex workers' husbands are aware of the profession but accepted due to poverty and family problems. The children and neighbors of the sex workers are aware about the profession.
5. Majority group of respondents from home based, brothel based, highway based sex workers and gall girls have selected the current profession due to insufficient income, family disputes, dependent children, poverty, lack of settlement, lack of care by the elders are the main factors, and a significant number of married respondents said the harassment by the husband and dissatisfaction of marital life also the reasons for their current profession.
6. The women sex workers from home based, brothel based and highway based women said that dependent parents/in-laws, take care of sibling & their children, and ill treated by parents/step mother made them as sex workers. Whereas majority of call girls said in addition to dependent parents/in-laws and ill-treated by parents/ stepmother, relatives instigation also the reason for their present position.
7. According to the response sample sex workers their occupation is a traditional one and even though the inter-caste marriage disputes made them sex workers and waiting for clients to earn money for their livelihood.
8. Majority group of home based and brothel based sex workers influenced by working environment and migration and neighborhood factors influence them, whereas most of the call girls and highway based respondents said that human trafficking, peer group and rape or persuasion by others influenced them to be the sex workers. The home based sex workers and call girls influenced by illicit relations and luxury life made them sex workers, whereas, the brothel based and highway based sex workers influenced by hobbies and habits.

9. A significant number of women sex workers from all categories don't know about the main transmit source of HIV/AIDS from one person to other, and especially many number of women sex workers from brothel based and highway based don't know about proper usage and dispose of condoms. It was also notices from the response of these samples that more than fifty percent are having habit of drink alcohol and take drugs since two years.
10. Most of the sample women sex workers have been suggested by co-sex workers, counselors, NGOs and their friends that the present profession possessed by these people is not a good one, where the role of NGOs in giving suggestions to women sex workers is found higher than other groups.
11. The women sex workers from home based, brothel based, highway based and call girls are facing problems with the police because of ridings on their activities and harassments, and sometimes they face problems with the public due to their profession activities. Sometimes the sex workers face problems with the clients regarding payment and misbehave.
12. The women sex workers from home based, brothel based, highway based and call girls are facing problems with the co-sex workers because of their professional rivalry, and some are facing problems with political leaders.
13. A dominant group of women sex workers said that whenever any problems occurred by police, public, clients, co-sex workers and political leaders, first NGOs come forward to protect these people and extend their hand to help them. The role of friends and social workers also indicate significant in helping the sex workers.
14. Majority group of women sex workers from all categories are doubted about HIV infection due to suggestions given by the NGOs, and they went to government hospitals for testing of HIV for the first time. And a significant number of women sex workers from all categories went to ICTC and private hospitals for testing of HIV infection.
15. The women sex workers from all categories went for testing of HIV on the reference of private doctors, government doctors, NGOs, friends and co-sex workers, where the NGOs participation is more in give reference to women sex

workers for testing of HIV infection. The women sex workers who have infected HIV virus go for meditation and consult with NGOs to overcome the crisis situation, still some of them drink alcohol and take drugs to forget their problem.

16. The sex workers felt their fiends, relative, co-sex workers and NGOs will come forward to support at the time of crisis situation raised in their lives, where the role of friends and NGOs part in giving suggestions to women sex workers found higher than others.
17. The data infers that the women sex workers said fiends, co-sex workers and NGOs will come forward to help them at the time legal raised, where the role of NGOs in providing legal suggestions to women sex workers found higher than others.

Conclusion

This study highlights various factors that influencing the women to became the sex workers and need to prevent HIV transmission by promoting condom use in intimate relations with others as well as to address sexual health with the perspective of sexual pleasure and fulfillment. Also, the focus on prevention of sexually transmitted infections has warranted ignoring other sexual health problems that sex workers may suffer from. The data indicates that women sex workers report multiple reasons for their present condition and need to be provided more protection for their better life.

It is evident that women marry at young and have multiple family problems. Also, as one-third of the women sex workers reported that they have their professional problems inside and outside of their lives. For the majority of these people who had undergone medical checkup and treatment of HIV infection, condom use should also be promoted as a dual method to protect against infections. Because of their ability to more easily provide services to high-risk groups like sex workers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will play a critical role in any successful HIV/AIDS prevention program. Since HIV is often transmitted through behavior deemed intimate or taboo, government health officials have a difficult time reaching the affected group. But NGOs, which have a long record of involvement in the field of health and social welfare,

possess several advantages over government agencies. The NGOs have rich experience working at the community level because their autonomous nature allows them to respond more quickly, they have access to marginalized groups, they generally work with the target groups to raise their self-esteem, they can act as a bridge between the community and the national level, they often employ innovative methods and their method of operation allows for cost- effectiveness. Furthermore, NGOs can choose their own areas of involvement according to their feasibility, past experience, and priorities. NGOs can be instrumental in providing information on HIV infection and AIDS to the public particularly to special target group populations like the young, women of reproductive age, prostitutes or sex workers, and intravenous drug users.